

40 WEEKS EARL BLUMENAUER #14 Comprehensive Immigration Reform 40 IDEAS

Background

The landscape of immigration is an evolving one. In 1970, the largest number of immigrants came to the United States from Canada, Germany and Italy; by 1980, it was Mexico. Today, studies show that more people are leaving the U.S. for Mexico than are coming in, and that undocumented immigration into the U.S. is down across all countries. Deportations of criminal aliens continue to rise, but approximately 11 million people who are without documentation live, work and participate in American life. Contrary to some of the more heated rhetoric, the vast majority of these people do not have a criminal record and are not a threat to our country.

It is time to bring people out of the shadows, especially the vulnerable families of mixed-status. Congress should work together on a comprehensive immigration reform in our Decade of Decision, but a reasonable approach is possible today - even in an election year and in our divisive political climate.

Solution

There are many proposals that deserve strong support and enthusiastic passage. We can start with the DREAM Act, the STAPLE Act, and the StartUp Visa Act, and ensure that vulnerable

American citizen children are not punished via the tax code.

The bipartisan DREAM Act allows undocumented immigrants, who were brought here as young children without any choice in the matter, to become permanent residents if they meet certain conditions, including college education or military service, as well as maintaining a good moral character. This eventual path to citizenship is not granted outright - it comes with responsibilities, benchmarks to reach and fees to pay. Millions of children and young adults are part of the fabric of our communities, Providing them this opportunity is in line with American values.

The bipartisan STAPLE Act simply makes it easier for foreign-born individuals who have been educated in the United States up to the Ph.D. level to remain in the country, and be employed by American businesses. Too many intelligent, highly-skilled workers are denied the opportunity to create jobs and drive economic growth here in America. This bill will be good for the economy, enhance national security, promote international goodwill, and help America remain a global leader in innovation.

The StartUp Visa Act establishes an employment visa for immigrants who create jobs and generate investment in the U.S. economy. The passage of this bill would welcome educated, successful entrepreneurs to our country, and expand opportunities for everyone.

Finally, the proposal to cut off the refundable child tax credit for over three million children whose parents do not have Social Security numbers – almost all of whom are American citizen children and in great economic need – is a disgrace. This tax credit was designed specifically to help vulnerable, struggling families meet the needs of children and it has been effective. Instead of advancing legislation which is a very blunt instrument, we should be doing a better job to fully understand the implications and opportunities to meet the needs of children living in poverty.

Children should not be pawns of politicians' games. We should once again give people an opportunity to earn the right to citizenship. America will be stronger and these families, especially families with children who are American citizens, would be better served. The DREAM ACT, the STAPLE Act and the Start UP Visa Act should be passed and implemented as we work toward comprehensive immigration reform that provides a thoughtful path to citizenship that people can earn, not through amnesty, but by paying taxes, learning the language, and demonstrating a clear commitment to what it takes to be a constructive part of our community. This is what ultimately will help build a stronger American future for all of our

families.

[<Previous Idea](#)
[Next Idea>](#)

